LIX. *An Account of the Effects of Electricity in paralytic Caſes. In a Letter to* John Pringle, *M. D. F. R. S. from* Benjamin Franklin, *Eſq*; *F. R. S.*

SIR,

Read Jan. 12, 1758. THE following is what I can at preſent recollect, relating to the effects of electricity in paralytic caſes, which have fallen under my obſervation.

Some years ſince, when the news-papers made mention of great cures performed in Italy or Germany, by means of electricity, a number of paralytics were brought to me from different parts of Penſylvania, and the neighbouring provinces, to be electriſed; which I did for them at their requeſt. My method was, to place the patient firſt in a chair, on an electric ſtool, and draw a number of large ſtrong ſparks from all parts of the affected limb or ſide. Then I fully charged two ſix-gallon glaſs jars, each of which had about three ſquare feet of ſurface coated; and I ſent the united ſhock of theſe thro' the affected limb or limbs; repeating the ſtroke commonly three times each day. The firſt thing obſerved was an immediate greater ſenſible warmth in the lame limbs, that had received the ſtroke, than in the others: and the next morning the patients uſually related, that they had in the night felt a pricking ſenſation in the fleſh of the paralytic limbs; and would ſometimes ſhew a number of ſmall red ſpots, which they

ſuppoſed were occaſioned by thoſe prickings. The limbs too were found more capable of voluntary motion, and ſeemed to receive ſtrength. A man, for inſtance, who could not the firſt day lift the lame hand from off his knee, would the next day raiſe it four or five inches, the third day higher; and on the fifth day was able, but with a feeble languid motion, to take off his hat. Theſe appearances gave great ſpirits to the patients, and made them hope a perfect cure; but I do not remember, that I ever ſaw any amendment after the fifth day: which the patients perceiving, and finding the ſhocks pretty ſevere, they became diſcouraged, went home, and in a ſhort time relapſed; ſo that I never knew any advantage from electricity in palſies, that was permanent. And how far the apparent temporary advantage might ariſe from the exerciſe in the patients journey, and coming daily to my houſe, or from the ſpirits given by the hope of ſucceſs, enabling them to exert more ſtrength in moving their limbs, I will not pretend to ſay.

Perhaps ſome permanent advantage might have been obtained, if the electric ſhocks had been accompanied with proper medicine and regimen, under the direction of a ſkilful phyſician. It may be, too, that a few great ſtrokes, as given in my method, may not be ſo proper as many ſmall ones; ſince, by the account from Scotland of a caſe, in which two hundred ſhocks from a phial were given daily, it ſeems, that a perfect cure has been made. As to any uncommon ſtrength ſuppoſed to be in the machine uſed in that caſe, I imagine it could have no ſhare in the effect produced; ſince the ſtrength

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of the ſhock from charged glaſs is in proportion to the quantity of ſurface of the glaſs coated; ſo that my ſhocks from thoſe large jars muſt have been much greater than any, that could be received from a phial held in the hand.

I am, with great reſpect,

SIR,

London, Dec. 21, 1757.

Your moſt obedient Servant,

R. Franklin.

LX. *Obſervations on the late Comet in* September *and* October 1757; *made at the* Hague *by Mr.* D. Klinkenberg: *In a Letter to the Rev.* James Bradley, *D. D. Aſtronomer Royal, and F. R. S, and Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at* Paris. *Tranſlated from the* Low Dutch.

SIR,

Read Jan. 12, 1758.

I Hope you will be pleaſed to excuſe the liberty, which I take, of troubling you with my obſervations on the comet, which made its appearance here, and in other parts of Europe, in the months of September and October laſt; and which, according to the news-papers, was firſt obſerved the 11th September by Mr. Gartner, at Dorlkeurtz near Dreſden; then by me, on the 16th